विरोधी काम कर रहा है, चाहे वह जंगलों का हो, चाहे वह जबर्दस्ती की छटनी हो, ये सारी की सारी गतिविधियां जानकारी होने के बावजूद इस कम्पनी को, जिसका बड़े-बड़े लोगों से सम्पर्क जगजाहिर है, ब्लैकलिस्ट करने के लिए क्या कदम उठा रहे हैं?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, under the agreement, after takeover, for one year, there is a provision that nobody should be retrenched and there has not been any retrenchment other than punishments or things like that. It is only after one year the employees were given the option of VRS. Even those employees who opted for VRS were the ones who were very senior, and those who were given two-months compensation or rather the rate of compensation was two months' salary per year of service. And those who were really benefited opted for the VRS. There would have been lot of pressure, but the employees resisted that pressure and they did not opt for VRS. On the contrary, there were 23 employees who opted for VRS, but the company did not given them VRS because the company felt that their services were required in the company to run it. This is the position.

श्री अमर सिंह: माननीय मंत्री जी, मैंने आपसे यह पूछा है कि श्रमिकों को पैसा देने की बजाय बाल्को ने 1.3 मिलियन यूएस डॉलर "Political and Awarness Trust" बना कर श्रमिकों का पैसा, शेयरहोल्डर्स का पैसा वहां दिया है और यह ट्रस्ट, जिसे बाल्को ने बनाया है-वेदान्त, इस ट्रस्ट को फंड करता है। कृपया इसके बारे में बताएं।

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: I am not aware of this particular information. I will obtain it and provide it to our hon. Member.

Criteria for conferring 'Classical Language' status

*282. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the criterial for conferring 'Classical Language' status on a language;

(b) the number of Indian languages conferred the status so far and the languages identified for the purpose;

(c) whether there is demand for conferring the 'Classical Language' status on Kannada and Tulu and inclusion of Tulu and Kodava languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard and Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The following criteria have been laid down for according classical status to a language:—

(i) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500—2000 years.

(ii) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.

(iii) The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.

(iv) The classical language and literature being distinct from modern there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

(b) So far the classical language status has been conferred on two languages *viz.* Tamil and Sanskrit. No other language has been identified for conferring the classical language status, so far.

(c) and (d) The demand for conferring the 'Classical Language' status on Kannada has been referred by the Ministry of Culture to the 'Committee of Linguistic Experts' constituted in Sahitya Akademi for the purpose. No such demand has been received in respect of Tulu.

Demands have been received for inclusion of various languages, including Tulu and Kodava language, in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. A Committee was set up under Shri Sitakant Mohapatra to evolve a set of objective criteria for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule. The Committee has submitted its report and made certain recommendations. The demands for inclusion of more languages including Tulu and Kodava in the Eighth Schedule will be considered, inter-alia, in the light of the recommendations of the Committee and Government decision thereon.

SHRI JANARADHANA POOJARY: Sir, the demand of declaring Kannada as a classical language is pending before the Government since 2004. The same answer has been given earlier also. My submission before the House is that the Kannada text and recorded history belongs to 252 BC. The first Kannada literary work *Kavirajamarga* was created in 850 AD and it refers to some writings earlier than that. The 12th Centuary Kannada Bhakti Movement in the form of *Vachana* or oral expression is unparallel. In contemporary *kritana* which subsequently became Karnataka Sangeet is an enduring contribution to Indian music. Sir, the epigraphical meterial in Kannada, numbering over 25,000 inscriptions in stone and copper, are rich in style and contents, which are not found even in Tamil inscription. The UNESCO records Kannada amongst the prime scripts of the world. Sir, Kannada is among the first living languages of the world in the history of continuous writing system spanning three millennium like Hebrew, Chinese and Tamil. Sir, the recognition was given to Tamil. We do not grudge it. Now, Sir, when the world recognises Kannada, in India...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, put your question.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: ...step-motherly treatment is being given to Karnataka. Agitations are going on in Karnataka. About three days back, about one lakh people gathered. Everyday, it is going on. Has the Government recognised this? Is the Government going to take any action on this, and by what time?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, Kannada is a very rich language, ancient language. The matter is before the Committee of Linguistic Experts constituted by the Ministry of Culture. This matter is now with the Ministry of Culture. They are looking into the matter. There are demands made by one other section of the society with respect to their language. Now, these demands are being looked into by the Expert Committee, and after the Expert Committee comes to any conclusion, the Ministry of Culture will take a decision in the matter.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, in reply to Unstarred Question No. 1381, it was stated, "The Ministry of Culture had received presentation from various quarters for declaring Kannada as classical language. A Committee of Linguistic Experts has been constituted to examine the claims of any language classical language status. This Committee will advise the Government in the matter." This answer was given on 6.3.2006. Subsequently, to me also, the Minister of Culture has replied saying that it has been referred. Now, the question before the House is as to how long it will go on like this. There is a limit to the patience of the people also. They are losing their patience. You may not believe, but they are condemning and criticising the Parliamentarians and saying that Karnataka M.P.'s are dormant, they are inactive.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, ask the question. Don't make a statement.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: How long will the Government take a decision? After being referred to the Expert Committee, there has been a lapse of one year, what action is going to be taken by the Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Poojary, this is a supplementary question. Please, ask the question. Don't make a statement.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: As a matter of fact, this question should have been sent to the Ministry of Culture. But, because, the notice was given to us, and the notice was given at the last moment, the question was accepted and we are replying to it. As a matter of fact, it is only the Ministry of Culture which is in a position to take a decision with respect to this, and I would like to say that the language should unite language should not divide. Many languages in our country are rich languages and they should be a source of our unity rather than division. So, it would be necessary for all of us to tell our brothers and sisters in the States that on the basis of language, division should not be created. Because the languages are rich, because the languages are ancient, because...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: There is no...(*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let the hon. Minister complete his reply...(*Interruptions*). Poojaryji, please, don't interfere.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the question is different.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: There are forces in the country which would like to use these kinds of things. The Government is quite sensitive to this matter. The Government has been looking into this matter and that is why, two languages in India have been recognised as classical languages. If there are other languages which have to be examined for this purpose, it will be done. But, then, before the decision in this respect is taken, it is our responsibility to see that it does not become a divisive factor.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Thanks a lot, Chairman, Sir, While we are very happy that Tamil has been rightly recognised as the classical language, our grievance is that Tamil happens to be a very rich language and in spite of that, it was beletedly recognised. I am inclined to ask as to what is the reason for recognising Tamil language so late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question, please.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Is it due to want of pressure or want of taking cognisance by the Committee...(*Interruptions*). It ought to have been recognised long-long back. It is an ancient language.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: May I very respectfully submit to this House that the concept of classical language is not as ancient as the language is? It was accepted in 2004. That is why that language has been recognised as a classical language. You should not find fault with it. If you say that it was not recognised in time, again, it becomes a divisive factor. Please don't do that.

T.V. MYSURA REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister had replied to Unstarred No. 2292 on 22.3.2007. The same reply was given regarding Telugu language that

the request for declaring Telugu as a classical language had been forwarded to the Sahitya Akademi. The same answer was given. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Committee has recommended to recognise Telugu as a classical language. If not, I want an assurance from the Minister to fix a time-frame for the Committee.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, the demand for recognising the Telugu language as a classical language is also before the Government. But, as I have already said, this matter is not with the Home Ministry. This matter is with the Ministry of Culture. As it was wrongly referred to us, we have not just thrown it out and we are answering the question. I am not in a position to give any kind of assurance.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the straight question to the hon. Minister is that a request has been made to the Minister for Culture and to the Minister for Home Affairs that Telugu should be recognised as a classical language. The Minister had answered this question in last March that they were going to refer it to a Committee of Experts. the Committee has been constituted. I would like to know from the Minister by which time this assurance will be honoured and whether there is any time-frame for that. Or, does he go on referring to the same thing? I request the hon. Minister to answer this.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I think, I have replied to this kind of questions.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: There should be a straight answer.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: No, there can't be any straight answer. Let us understand that we are all very responsible Members sitting in this august House. Each one of us appreciates the value of culture and language and that is why we shall have to take a considered view. It is true that Telugu language is a rich language; Kannada language is also a rich language. There are 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule and there are 37 demands pending with the Government for their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. Now, these issues are real issues. If we don't handle these issues in an appropriate manner, instead of uniting, it will become a divisive force. That is why I request that it should not be done. (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. Your question is over. (*Interruptions*)... Please, hon. Member. (*Interruptions*)... No. (*Interruptions*)... Please, hon. Member. (*Interruptions*)... If the Members wish to have a discussion on this, that is a separate matter. (*Interruptions*)... But it is not in the Question Hour. (*Interruptions*)... Q. No. 283. (*Interruptions*)...

FTA with other countries

*283. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of countries with which India has so far entered into Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or similar agreements; and

(b) the specific industries which have been adversely affected by these agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) India has signed Free Trade Agreement (FTAs) with Sri Lanka, Singapore, Nepal and Bhutan. India has also signed South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) with Bangladesh,